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Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada

NSERC Contact

Investing in people, discovery and innovation

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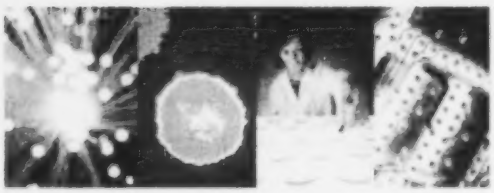

A Good Start

Editorial by NSERC President Tom Brzustowski

The 2003 Budget was presented February 18. At the time this is being written, there are many details to sort out, but it is already clear that the news is very good for university research in science and engineering.

In broad terms, NSERC had identified a pressing need for an increase of $75 million per year in our base budget. The top priority in our request was funding for the huge number of first-time applicants for discovery grants; the second item — the biggest of five — was better support for more graduate students. In the event, we received a base increase of $55 million p.a., as well as 30 per cent of a fund of $105 million p.a. (to be phased in over four years) for new Canada Graduate Scholarships. That should give NSERC the capacity to address many of the most pressing current needs of the research community. Planning for the expected new pressures in the coming years must be left for another day.

In addition to providing more funds for the direct costs of research through the granting councils, the government launched a program to help the universities with the indirect costs of research at an annual level of $225 million. Among other things, that funding is expected to support increased university activity in the commercialization of inventions coming out of research.

So what about the Innovation Strategy? Where was it in the Budget Speech? The answer came soon after the Budget in an open letter from Minister of Industry Allan Rock and Minister of Human Resources Development Jane Stewart.

This letter describes in useful detail how the Budget connects to the Innovation Strategy. Even though the Innovation Strategy had not been in the news recently, and it was not a major theme in the Budget Speech, the 2003 Budget has provided funds for several important initiatives recommended in the National Summit on Innovation and Learning last November 19.

I believe the resources are now in place for a good start on making the Innovation Strategy real. And that is both appropriate and timely. The 2003 Budget includes many commitments to spending on health care, the environment, and other important

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NSERC is Canada's instrument for promoting and supporting university research in the natural sciences and engineering, other than the health sciences.

NSERC supports both basic university research through discovery grants and project research through partnerships among universities, governments and the private sector, as well as the advanced training of highly qualified people.

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Continued from cover page

social programs for several years to come. But to be spent, wealth must first be created. And it is the Innovation Strategy that deals with building the foundations for enhanced wealth creation in Canada.

NSERC's Council will meet on March 5 to decide how to allocate the resources we have been given for 2003-04. Because of the February 18 Budget, that can be an optimistic and positive exercise.

New Applicants and Students Targeted

Subject to Treasury Board approval, Council recommended at its March 5 meeting that the largest part of the $55 million added to NSERC's budget be used to fund new applicants for Discovery Grants. This continues the practice of the last few years of increasing the Discovery Grants budget so that new faculty can launch their research careers. In addition, improved support for graduate students and more Undergraduate Student Research Awards are planned. Council also recommended additional funding for northern and climate research, partnership programs, Major Facilities Access grants, and PromoScience. Precise details about NSERC's 2003 budget will be available in the coming months.

Reaching Out to the World...

This past winter saw the creation of an Outreach group within Communications at NSERC. The mandate of this group is to build awareness of NSERC and the research it supports among audiences that are important to us such as business, youth, and local communities.

At present, the group consists of Viviane Dugas-Patry, who is responsible for the coordination of external NSERC events, Laurie-Anne Kempton, who manages and advises on marketing and outreach initiatives geared towards increasing industry participation in NSERC's Research Partnership programs, and Robert Roy, who will be concentrating on building up the NSERC Reps organization. Robert is also the group's manager.

"Research is NSERC's business, but I see a need to build alliances beyond the research community itself. That's what the outreach group is all about," said Communications Director Tim Nau.

The NSERC Reps met Jan. 23–24 in Ottawa. Fifty Reps attended. Federal MP and former Trent faculty member Peter Adams spoke on the relationship between researchers and politicians at the evening dinner, and the following day Reps offered feedback and attended workshops on promoting science to the young, communication with the media and MPs, and celebrating successes.

For more information, e-mail the Outreach group at outreach@nserc.ca, or call Robert Roy at (613) 996-9257.

University - Industry Synergy

Call for Nominations

NSERC invites your nominations for the **2003 Synergy Awards for Innovation**, a nationwide competition that showcases Canada's most effective university-industry collaborations.

The Synergy Awards for Innovation recognize and reward innovation and outstanding collaborative research in the natural sciences and engineering. Winning universities receive a $25,000 NSERC research grant. Industry partners receive the prestigious Synergy sculpture.

Submit your nomination by May 30.

For more information, visit www.nserc.ca/synergy or contact Pamela Moss at (613) 996-2335.

Discovery Grants to Run Five Years

Main recommendation of NSERC report implemented immediately

NSERC is extending the normal duration of Discovery Grants to five years, from four. This is the most significant decision resulting from the newly published *Final Report on the Lightening the Load Exercise*, and should reduce the load on applicants, grant selection committees and external referees by approximately 20 per cent.

This report is the conclusion of extensive consultations with the research community to look at ways to make it easier to apply to NSERC, reduce the workload of peer review, and consolidate NSERC programs.

NSERC will begin implementing the five-year grants decision this spring. To even out the competition numbers, some grants over the upcoming four-year cycle will be extended by one more year. This is necessary to ensure homogeneous cohorts and balanced annual competition budgets starting with the 2004 competition. NSERC staff will inform individual grantees being extended in April of the year they would otherwise apply to renew their grant.

Other actions recommended in the Lightening the Load report include the amalgamation of the Collaborative Research Opportunities grants, the International Opportunity Fund, and the New Directions area of the Strategic Project Grants program; new eBusiness tools; a rejuvenated NSERC Web site; and improved communications with the academic community. These changes should save time for applicants, peer reviewers and university administrators.

You will find the report on NSERC's Web site at www.nserc.ca/about/light_e.htm. If you have questions or comments, please send them to EVP-NSERC@nserc.ca.

Information for New Researchers

If you've recently become an NSERC grant holder, or are planning to submit your first application, take the time to check out some of the following sources of information. They will help you learn more about the Council and its programs and, in the long run, save you time:

- NSERC Web site (www.nserc.ca): This is a pretty obvious place to start. You'll find program news, instructions for preparing grant applications (which you should read carefully!), advice on how to prepare a successful application, etc.
- Your colleagues: NSERC Reps (for the name of your Rep, visit www.nserc.ca/about/reps_list_e.htm), Research Grants Officers, other professors who have been on selection committees before or are on them currently (these members will not be involved in the review of your application, so feel free to speak to them), department heads, successful researchers, etc.
- September site visits: Each year, Research Grants staff and Grant Selection Committee members visit a number of postsecondary institutions to brief staff on recent NSERC developments, hold grantsmanship sessions and meet researchers. Since much of the information presented is general in nature, you should attend these sessions even if the visiting team is not in your discipline.
- NSERC Newsbureau: Contact them (newsbureau@nserc.ca) if you have a new discovery or a major paper that you want to let the world know about. There's also a useful guide on how to communicate with the public at www.nserc.ca/seng/how1en.htm (see sidebar).
- NSERC Staff: a list of who is looking after which discipline is on our Web site. Phone us, or e-mail us. We're here to help!

Guide Helps You to Explain Your Research to the Public

One of the hidden treasures on NSERC's Web site is the *Communicating Science to the Public* guide. It tells you, among other things, the basics of media relations and how to handle a difficult interview. And by all accounts, it's easy to use.

"The text is well written, the navigation is simple and obvious, and it answers all the right questions....I can't sing its praises enough," a correspondent recently told *Contact*.

"NSERC encourages grant recipients to let the public know what they're doing, and to do so in language and style that the public will find accessible and appealing," says President Tom Brzustowski. "Taxpayers pay the bill for university research, and they should know how their money is used. I believe that the more the public finds out about the research done in Canada, the more likely they are to see it as important, exciting, and worthwhile."

To access *Communicating Science*, go to www.nserc.ca/seng/how1en.htm.

2003 NSERC Prize Winners

The winners of the 2003 NSERC prizes were announced in March by Allan Rock, Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for NSERC, Rey Pagtakhan, Secretary of State (Science, Research and Development), and Tom Brzustowski, President of NSERC.

The NSERC E.W.R. Steacie Memorial Fellowships, Doctoral Prizes, and Howard Alper Postdoctoral Prize, which are among Canada's most important research prizes, will be presented at a ceremony later this year during which the winner of the Gerhard Herzberg Canada Gold Medal for Science and Engineering will also be honoured.

For additional information on the winners, visit www.nserc.ca, and on the prizes, visit www.nserc.ca/fact_e.ca.

2003 NSERC Steacie Fellows

Dr. Michel Gingras
University of Waterloo
Frustrated Magnets

Dr. Michel Gingras

Dr. Michel Gingras is at the forefront of research into frustrated magnetic systems and glasses, classes of materials in which the atoms in the solid state are randomly arranged.

These disordered systems are important in the study of high-temperature superconductivity, and in the creation of longer-life batteries and so-called ferromagnetic semiconductors, a class of materials in which the magnetic moments can be used to carry information in electronic devices.

The new Steacie Fellow will explore the role of quantum mechanics in these disordered systems.

Dr. Zongchao Jia
Queen's University
Protein X-ray Crystallography

Dr. Jia's lab is a leader in the use of x-ray crystallography to deduce protein structure.

His lab has led the way in the structural study of anti-freeze proteins, identifying the structures of four such proteins, including one in fish and the first ever in an insect.

Dr. Zongchao Jia

In 1999, Dr. Jia's lab won a heated international race to determine the structure of calpain, a calcium-regulated protein that plays a role in diseases from Alzheimer's to Muscular Dystrophy and in heart attacks.

As a Steacie Fellow, Dr. Jia will study phosphorylation proteins that are involved in cellular function, and phytase, an enzyme that liberates the nutrient phosphorus stored in plant seeds.

Dr. Victoria Kaspi

Dr. Victoria Kaspi
McGill University
Neutron Stars

Dr. Kaspi's research team is using the world's most advanced satellite-based x-ray telescopes, including NASA's $1-billion Chandra X-Ray Observatory, as well as the largest Earth-based radio telescopes to locate and study the behaviour of neutron stars.

It's research that provides a unique window on the physics of matter under extreme conditions. Neutron stars are the visible close cousins of black holes.

In the September 12, 2002, issue of *Nature*, her group reported the first observations of distinctive bursts of x-rays from so-called anomalous x-ray pulsars, thereby proving that these stellar remnants are a class of neutron stars called magnetars.

As a Steacie Fellow, Dr. Kaspi will be scanning the Milky Way for as yet undiscovered millisecond pulsars in order to determine their maximum spin speeds.

Dr. Gary Saunders

Dr. Gary Saunders
University of New Brunswick
Algal Systematics

Dr. Saunders' research of the past decade has pioneered the use of new genetic analyses to reinterpret the evolutionary history and familial relationships of red algae, and several other algal groups. The research has demonstrated that, contrary to previous thinking, some of the simplest red algae are the most recently evolved.

The economically important polysaccharides found in red algae are used to produce the emulsifiers and thickeners in products ranging from ice cream (carrageen) to cosmetics.

Dr. Saunders' lab will be looking for new genetic markers to further their ongoing gene-based reassessment of red algal systematics and link red algal genetics to these organisms' enormous range of reproductive strategies.

Dr. Molly Shoichet
University of Toronto
Tissue Engineering

Dr. Shoichet, an expert in the creation and modification of polymers, is a world leader in the application of tissue engineering to spinal cord regeneration.

Her lab has designed specialized tiny tubes that mimic the structure and feel of spinal cord tissue. Her experiments have also shown that spinal cord nerve cell regeneration is in part guided by specific concentration gradients of chemicals in the tissue.

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Dr. Molly Shoichet

Dr. Kim Vicente

As a Steacie Fellow, Dr. Shoichet will continue her work to develop new biodegradable tissue bridges, and a less invasive way to deliver a sustained concentration gradient of neural growth factor using an injectable polymer.

Dr. Kim Vicente
University of Toronto
Cognitive Engineering

Dr. Vicente is a leading player in the rapidly growing field of cognitive engineering. In 1988, he coined the term ecological interface design (EID) to describe a new way of designing complex process control systems that takes into account the ways we think, perceive and behave.

His research group was the first to apply cognitive engineering principles to the redesign of a commercially available medical device, patient controlled analgesia (PCA).

With his Steacie Fellowship, Dr. Vicente will continue to explore improvements to the PCA design — a project that has become all the more important given reports of potential deaths related to the use of the device.

Recipient of the 2003 NSERC Howard Alper Postdoctoral Prize

Dr. Ryan Gregory
University of Guelph
Evolutionary Role of Genome Size

Dr. Gregory's Ph.D. work established him as a world leader in the study of the evolutionary significance of genome size diversity.

During doctoral work at the University of Guelph with Dr. Paul Hebert, Dr. Gregory drew together previously published research to compile the world's largest database of animal genome sizes. This online collection (www.genomesize.com) includes approximately 3,000 animal genomes and has become a critical resource for researchers worldwide, receiving 25–50 hits a day.

Using the database, Dr. Gregory did the first statistical analysis of large data sets of animal genome size.

At present, he's an NSERC postdoctoral fellow at the American Museum of Natural History's Comparative Genomics Institute.

2003 NSERC Doctoral Prize Winners

Dr. David Bryce
Dalhousie University
Solid-State NMR and Computational Chemistry

Dr. David Bryce's doctoral research used nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) to characterize, for the first time, some of the 3-dimensional interactions specific to elements such as boron, chlorine and chromium.

These unique NMR data are important to materials scientists who are trying to understand the fundamental properties of molecules that contain these elements.

His innovative NMR work, with supervisor Dr. Roderick Wasylishen (now at the University of Alberta), was complicated by the fact that most of the nuclei Dr. Bryce was studying are "quadrupolar."

Dr. Bryce is presently continuing his work in developing new NMR techniques as an NSERC postdoctoral fellow at the U.S. National Institutes of Health Laboratory of Chemical Physics in Bethesda, Maryland.

Dr. Erik Demaine
University of Waterloo
Mathematics of Folding

Dr. Demaine is a prodigy in the mathematics of folding, and at 21 the youngest professor now at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The University of Waterloo graduate's doctoral thesis with his supervisors Drs. Anna Lubiw and Ian Munro solved what's known as the Carpenter's Rule Problem. During his doctoral research he also created the proof for the Fold and Cut Problem.

Understanding the possibilities and limits of folding and unfolding in general is important to a wide range of applications, from sheet metal fabrication to airbag storage and bioinformatics, where the math is used to understand, and perhaps predict, how proteins fold. The Carpenter's Rule Problem also applies directly to the design of robotic arms used in industry.

Dr. Martin Dvorak
Simon Fraser University
Novel Heterojunction Bipolar Transistors

In 2001, as part of his doctoral research, Dr. Dvorak set a semiconductor speed record of 305 gigahertz, at the time the fastest bipolar transistor ever created in any semiconductor material.

Using an approach suggested by his supervisor, Dr. Colombo Bolognesi, Dr. Dvorak's speed record was based on using a semiconductor "sandwich," made up of layers of indium phosphide, gallium arsenide antimonide, and indium phosphide. These materials are particularly useful for specialized high-power and high-frequency applications where silicon-based transistors lose speed.

Dr. Dvorak is now working with California-based Agilent Technologies Inc. to commercialize similar technologies.

Dr. David Vocadlo
University of British Columbia
Catalytic Mechanisms of Glycosidases

Dr. David Vocadlo's doctoral work, with supervisor Dr. Stephen Withers, clarified the general catalytic mechanism for a key group of the enzymes called glycosidases. When we eat pasta or potatoes, certain glycosidases work on a carbohydrate such as starch by breaking the links between the many constituent sugar units that make it up, liberating them for use by our bodies.

His intensive research resulted in a 2001 *Nature* paper that revised the text book explanation for the functioning of hen egg white lysozyme, an iconic glycosidase.

Dr. Vocadlo's study of five specific glycosidases involved the use of mass spectrometry, chemical synthesis of alternative forms of carbohydrates, and X-ray crystallographic analysis (in collaboration with a British colleague) of intermediary enzyme reaction structures.

He is now a postdoctoral fellow at the University of California, Berkeley.

NSERC Now Funding 122 Science Promotion Groups

PromoScience, the NSERC program aimed at cultivating young people's interest in science and engineering, is now in its third year. After reviewing 79 applications last November, the selection panel recommended that 27 organizations receive funding totalling $912,750 in 2003. They join 95 other groups creating imaginative science programming for young people that benefit from PromoScience funding.

Panel chair Tim Lougheed, who has participated in the selection process over the last two years, said: "We saw fewer large projects, the kind that might affect many hundreds or even thousands of students during the course of a year. Instead, we were impressed by carefully targeted — and carefully designed — programs that might reach fewer individuals, but could conceivably have an enduring impact on their lives, as well as the lives of their communities. And it was most satisfying to see this kind of ambitious imagination being applied in some of Canada's most remote corners, where that impact could be felt most profoundly."

He added that the reputation of PromoScience has clearly been growing from year to year, based on the geographic and institutional diversity of the applications. A list of the successful applicants can be found on the PromoScience Web site at www.nserc.ca/promoscience.

Funding for Tech Transfer Training

Three networks of universities and other institutions will get $1,400,000 over the next two years to train people in tech transfer.

NT Atlantic (10 universities from the Atlantic region, led by Memorial University of Newfoundland) will get $400,000; the Programme de formation en valorisation de technologies (14 universities, led by the Université de Sherbrooke) is to receive $450,000; and WestLink (representing 23 members from western Canadian universities, colleges, technical and research institutes) is to get $550,000. The funding is for two years.

Training more technology transfer practitioners to help universities and hospitals kick-start the commercialization of publicly funded research is part of Canada's Innovation Strategy. NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR held a one-time competition last November, under their joint Intellectual Property Management program, to fund networked regional initiatives.

The training will include hands-on experience in academic institutions, small and medium-sized enterprises, government departments, and venture capital firms. Trainees are expected to have a background in science and technology, as well as some business experience.

Further details can be found at www.nserc.ca/programs/ipm_trainres_e.htm.

The NSERC Concourse: Bringing People Together

The NSERC Concourse Web site continues to provide a place for students, researchers and companies to find research partners. Participants may submit descriptive postings via e-mail, under four headings: For Students, For Researchers, For Companies and Job Postings.

The NSERC Concourse is a free service open to individuals and organizations involved in research areas that fall under NSERC's mandate.

For more information, visit www.nserc.ca/match/main-e.htm.

Tools to Help You Share Information and Save Time

NSERC's eBusiness team, in collaboration with SSHRC and CIHR, recently validated its Financial Data Submission and Reconciliation (FDSR) system that will allow university representatives to transmit electronically their annual Form 300 financial data to the agencies. The valuable feedback and information collected during the five-week validation will be used to develop the final version of the system.

Results of the on-line collaboration pilot project are also in and the feedback is very positive. NSERC staff and peer review committee members who participated found that the on-line tool brought people and information together and allowed work to be done efficiently. According to participants, the tool has great potential to facilitate committee members' work and they expect it will soon become indispensable.

"The FDSR and the on-line collaboration initiative are two important components of the eBusiness Project and we are very pleased the university research community is helping us develop tools that will reduce the administrative burden on researchers, university administrators and peer reviewers," says Christiane Villemure, eBusiness Project Director.

For the latest on the eBusiness Project, visit wwww.nserc.ca/e/index_e.htm.

The Professor Who Goes Out in the Cold

Icing of power lines and other components of power grids is an unavoidable problem in the Canadian winter. Studying and understanding the effects of such icing is the central goal of the research being done by Université de Sherbrooke Professor Masoud Farzaneh, holder of the Hydro-Québec Industrial Research Chair on Atmospheric Icing of Power Grid Equipment (commonly known by its French acronym, CIGELE).

Dr. Farzaneh's chair, which has just been renewed for a second 5-year term, offers an exemplary model of co-operation between academia and industry. The major successes of CIGELE have made it a lot easier to recruit highly qualified researchers and graduate students. To date, some 40 people, including 16 master's and doctoral students and five postdoctoral fellows, have participated in CIGELE's research. CIGELE also partners and collaborates with some twenty industrial and academic organizations throughout the world.

Dr. Farzaneh, who also holds a Canada Research Chair, believes that holding an NSERC Industrial Research Chair confers many advantages. "You can focus your research more directly on practical applications. In our chair's case, we are doing research that is innovative, pioneering and complex."

Dr. Masoud Farzaneh

One of the challenges for Dr. Farzaneh is to balance his substantial administrative responsibilities as chairholder with the requirements of his research, which demands a great deal of time and constant attention.

"The Industrial Research Chairs," says Dr. Farzaneh, "make it possible to plan longer-term research projects. They also provide the opportunity to train more highly qualified people."

Dr. Farzaneh is very pleased to have partners such as Hydro-Québec working side-by-side with him. Along with other partners, Hydro-Québec places human and physical resources at CIGELE's disposal, thus enabling it to achieve its research objectives much more quickly and easily.

In 2000, working closely with Hydro-Québec, CIGELE established a world-class laboratory on power grid equipment icing. The new laboratory building houses the most technologically advanced equipment for simulating icing of high-voltage equipment. As Dr. Farzaneh proudly relates, "This laboratory is the only one of its kind. Together with the critical mass and expertise that we have developed within CIGELE, it enables us to conduct research projects on a major scale."

CIGELE enjoys an international reputation, and its experts are asked for their advice and opinions when problems arise as the result of ice storms. One of the most notable of the many successes achieved by Dr. Farzaneh and his team is a model for predicting arc shorting on ice-covered insulators. It was recognized by *Québec Science* as one of the ten most important scientific discoveries made in Quebec in 1999.

Staff Changes

Barbara Muir

Serge Villemure

Norman Marcotte

Three NSERC staff members have recently taken on new roles at the Council. Barbara Muir is the new Director of Information, Communications and Manufacturing Sectors in the Research Partnerships Program, replacing Margaret Caughey who is now devoting her time to special projects. Serge Villemure and Norman Marcotte have been appointed Directors in the Research Grants and Scholarships Directorate for nine-month terms. Norman will continue to look after Life and Earth Sciences and Interdisciplinary (he's replacing Elizabeth Boston who is on leave), and Serge will head the Physical and Mathematical Sciences division, replacing Danielle Ménard who is spearheading a special project in the Council's Common Administrative Services Directorate.

Render Unto Caesar ...

Researchers traditionally acknowledge their sponsor(s) when they publish their results in scientific or technical journals. But is the same fine tradition followed when they communicate their research elsewhere? We would appreciate it if researchers would acknowledge NSERC in talks, lectures and presentations. And it would be great if undergraduate students as well as potential collaborators, industrial partners, and reporters know that your research is funded by NSERC.

Don't forget to acknowledge NSERC in as many forums as you can. You'll be helping us help you!

Newsbureau Working for You

As always, the NSERC Newsbureau continues to alert the media about NSERC issues and NSERC-funded researchers. Here are some examples of what we've been up to since the last time we reported to you.

Dr. Ken Jones' findings that big "box stores" are taking business away from main street retailers was written up in the Newsbureau Bulletin on Nov. 25. As a result, the Ryerson University researcher was featured in an *Edmonton Journal* story the very next day. On the following day, it ran in *La Presse*. The same newspaper referred to Dr. Jones' work in yet another article on Dec. 16.

"Older peoples' morals boost memory: Older generation less likely to forget appointments" read the heading of a Dec. 12 *Ottawa Citizen* story. This was inspired by the previous day's Newsbureau Bulletin feature on University of British Columbia researcher Dr. Peter Graf's work. *The Calgary Herald* also covered the story on Christmas Eve.

The discovery by Dr. Hal Whitehead's Dalhousie University team that whales communicate with different dialects was placed by the Newsbureau with Discovery Channel's *Daily Planet*, which aired the story on Dec. 22.

Dec. 2, *The Ottawa Citizen* took a story from the NSERC Newsbureau Bulletin featuring Dr. Sylvain Moineau, a microbiologist at Université Laval. He has developed a vector or "gene gun" to insert genes into Lactococcus lactis, the bacterium that turns milk into cheddar cheese. *La Presse* ran the story Jan. 2.

In the New Year, the Newsbureau helped promote Dr. Dan Levitin's discovery about the wiring of the brains of individuals with Williams Syndrome. This resulted in a *Globe and Mail* story on Jan. 19. The Newsbureau then placed the McGill researcher's story with *Daily Planet* which featured it on Feb. 19.

The Ottawa Citizen picked up the Newsbureau Bulletin story of Dr. Bradley White's use of forensic DNA techniques for tracking the importation of raccoon rabies from across the border. It ran on January 19.

The Newsbureau was also busy at the time of the two Revelstoke avalanches, putting journalists in touch with researchers working on avalanche science and prediction.

What Can the GRF or GGSF Do for You?

Did you know that NSERC allows your university to retain residual funds from prior years? The funds are kept in special accounts – the **"General Research Fund" (GRF)** and the **General Graduate Studies Fund (GGSF)**.

These special NSERC accounts are held in trust by university presidents to be used for the broad purpose of enhancing the quality of research and training in the natural sciences and engineering. Money from the General Research Fund may be used to provide small start-up grants to new professors, bridge funding to professors who are between applications, additional funds to professors in support of their research, etc. Universities can draw on the General Graduate Studies Fund for such purposes as supporting visa students, and travel to conferences, or helping students in transition between their Ph.D. and a postdoctoral fellowship position.

For more information, talk to your Research Grants Officer, Business Officer, or Scholarship Liaison Officer.

Link Up With European Researchers

Information Society Technologies Europe-Canada (IST-EC) offers you an opportunity to establish a network of potential European research partners in ***new media***, ***e-content*** and ***broadband technology***. An IST-EC Brokerage session will take place June 10 during the week-long Banff Television Festival in Banff. For more information, visit www.nserc.ca/intnew.htm (under "New Opportunities"). For details about NSERC's International Opportunity Fund (IOF) call for IST-EC proposals, visit www.nserc.ca/ist_e.htm.

Should You Defer Your Next Grant Instalment?

If you are experiencing a slowdown or delay in your research program and consequently have a buildup of residual funds in your research account, you should consider deferring your next instalment. This will provide you with an extra year to ramp up your activities and strengthen your research program before reapplying. It will also permit NSERC to fund other researchers who might otherwise be unable to carry on their work.

Deferring an instalment does not adversely affect your standing with NSERC or the grant selection committee charged with reviewing your research grant application.

If you have any questions, send an e-mail to casdfinance@nserc.ca.

Canada-E.U. Research Exchanges

The European Commission has established two new fellowship programs to facilitate collaborations and exchanges between researchers in Europe and those in other countries like Canada: the **Marie Curie Outgoing International Fellowships** will enable Canadian researchers to invite European colleagues to Canada for up to two years, and the **Marie Curie Incoming International Fellowships** will allow recent Canadian graduates to spend up to two years working in European research centres.

For more information about these fellowships, visit: www.nserc.ca/intnew.htm (under "New Opportunities").